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ABSTRACT

Following the slave uprising led by Nat Turner in 1831, the change in public sentiment compelled Virginians to speak openly in public and in the legislature about the institution they had guarded long in silence. The effect of Turner's insurrection was further conditioned by the growing sectional antagonism between the eastern and western portions of the state. The former practiced a plantation economy based on slave labor, while the latter formed an industrious yeomanry composed of shopkeepers, artisans, and farmers--an economy independent of the slavery system. With these factors in mind, Virginians demanded open discussion of the slave problem in 1831-1832. Eastern economic interests opposed any form of emancipation, while westerners argued for exportation of the slave population. Unable to reconcile the two competing factions, Virginia's leaders focused their attention on basic moral considerations. Moral arguments on both sides of the issue were based on Biblical texts, and on the concepts of equality and liberty from the Constitution. Both sides blended moral and economic arguments to promote acceptance of their respective positions. Proslavery forces won the debates on economic grounds, but the sectional conflict of the state only reflected the rise of sectionalism throughout the country which precipitated the Civil War. (HTH)

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The Triumph of Mammon Over Morality: A Rhetorical Analysis of Economic and Moral Arguments in the Virginia Slave Debates

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The Triumph of Mammon Over Morality: A Rhetorical Analysis of Economic and Moral Arguments in the Virginia Slave Debates

Divergent ideology has long been recognized as a primary obstacle in pre-civil war legislative and public discussions of abolition. Regional interests and cultural attitudes of northern abolitionists and of southern slaveholders evaded compromise as this nation confronted an ideological struggle that grew into a battle of much larger proportions. Yet long before the slavery issue commanded widespread national discussion and forced major civil divisions, the question of abolition was debated by the people of an individual state in a manner that foreshadowed the events of the larger national controversy.

A combination of religious, political and economic forces converged to prompt formulation of slavery arguments first expounded in Virginia and later adopted for national use. The Virginia slave debate of 1831-1832 warrants rhetorical inquiry because the arguments presented codified major premises of both slavery and antislavery advocates. The debate epitomizes the later civil strife: in this small drama exist the identical patterns of thought and behavior that divided the nation over preservation or destruction of a two hundred year-old institution.

Slavery functioned as a long-standing and generally-accepted practice in Virginia until the institution came under serious public scrutiny in the legislative debates of 1831-1832. Beginning with the legal recognition of slavery in the state in 1670, slave numbers increased rapidly: in 1800, the black population surpassed that of

the white by 3,000, in 1820, by 65,000, and in 1830, by 81,000.[1]

The Impact of Turner's Rebellion

Increasing slave numbers did not alone provide cause for alarm on the part of slaveowners. As long as docile obedience to authority characterized slave attitudes, masters little feared the disproportionate ratio of slaves to slaveholders. With the advent of the 1831 Southampton slave revolt led by Nat Turner, however, such complacency shattered and gave way to growing concern for domestic safety. Even Governor John Floyd of Virginia, who often remained silent about the institution of slavery, wrote in his diary that "This day [August 23] will be a very noted day in Virginia."[2] Turner's bloody insurrection demonstrated that slaves could organize to assault the property and lives of their masters. The white population of Virginia, fearing the possibility of future Southamptons, remained apprehensive and disquieted long after Turner and his followers had been punished.[3] As their apprehension abated, Virginians felt compelled to speak openly in public and in the legislature about the institution they had guarded long in silence. As a liberal slaveowner remarked, "A few months have wrought a great change in public sentiment concerning this subject."[4]

The Impact of Sectionalism in Virginia

The effect of Turner's insurrection on Virginia was further conditioned by the growing sectional antagonism between the eastern and western portions of the state. The Tidewater and Piedmont areas contended with the Shenandoah Valley and Trans-Alleghany sections over

economic policy, slavery, and social conduct.

Easterners practiced a plantation economy, producing tobacco and cotton with slave labor.[5] In the absence of machinery, this eastern economy depended upon the cheap slave labor.[6] In contrast to their eastern cousins, westerners formed an industrious yeomanry composed of shopkeepers, artisans, mechanics, and farmers.[7] Westerners raised wheat and livestock with a minimum of free labor and thus formed an economy independent of the slavery system.[8]

Still a further difference between eastern and western Virginia lay in variations between black population density in the two areas. As reported in the census figures of 1830, an average of fifty-five percent of the Tidewater and Piedmont population was black; blacks thus outnumbered whites east of the Blue Ridge. By contrast, the west reported a somewhat different ratio; blacks constituted only twenty-three percent of the Valley population and a mere ten percent of the Trans-Alleghany section.[9]

People of western Virginia, out-distanced in the race for material wealth by new states to the north and west, and firm in the belief that slavery was causing their impoverishment, attributed their lack of prosperity to policies favoring the slaveholding portion of the state. Leaders from the west compared and contrasted the economic strength of Virginia to that of the free states, arguing that the natural resources of the west would attract capital and population if only the slave system were removed.[10]

Events Precipitating the Slave Debate:

With sectional differences and slave uprisings weighing heavily on their minds, legislators gathered in Richmond to hear Governor Floyd address the Virginia assembly on December 6, 1831. Floyd surveyed the problems confronting the state and focused on the Southampton insurrection at length. He urged that the assembly appropriate funds to remove free blacks from the state. Wishing to avoid open discussion of black deportation, the legislature referred Floyd's remarks to a committee formed to investigate the causes of Turner's Rebellion, and thus removed the issue from the floor of the assembly.

Both antislavery advocates, led by James McDowell, Charles Faulkner, and William B. Preston, and proslavery forces, led by William O. Goode, William H. Roane, and John T. Brown, remained content to keep discussion of slavery matters confined to committee.[11] During the next four weeks, the Southampton investigative committee considered various memorials and petitions, including a noted antislavery petition from the Quakers of Charles County.[12] On January 11, 1832, proslavery advocate Goode, attempting to prevent even committee action on the slavery question, proposed legislation to stop the committee's consideration of petitions relating to the slavery issue in any way.[13]

Unable to hear the committee proceedings for themselves, and disgruntled by legislative maneuvers, Virginians broke their silence and demanded open discussion on the well-guarded subject.[14] With a satiric tone, the Richmond Constitutional Whig conducted a contest to discover "who could suggest the best scheme to remove the Black curse."[15] Yet, within days, treatment of the slavery controversy changed from sarcastic

contests to genuine concern, as evidenced by an editorial in The Richmond Enquirer:

> Are we forever to suffer the greatest evil, which can scourge our land, not only to remain, but to increase in its dimensions? "We may shut our eyes and avert our faces if we please," (writes an eloquent S. Carolinian . . .) "But there it is, the dark and growing evil at our doors -- What is to be done? Oh! My God -- I don't know, but something must be done." . . . we say now, in the utmost sincerity of our hearts, that our wisest men cannot give too much of their attention to this subject -- nor can they give it too soon.[16]

At the statehouse, representatives reacted to increasingly volatile public opinion with more legislative machinations. Realizing that discussion of the slavery issue could be buried in committee no longer, eastern legislators sponsored measures designed to protect the state from future rebellions and to secure the existence of the slavery system.[17] Western legislators, prone to more extreme actions, attempted to block proslavery measures by introducing countering antislavery legislation designed to rid the state of slavery entirely.[18] With the introduction of these antislavery measures, all attempts to take preventive steps against slave revolt were abandoned and legislators turned their attention to debate over the continuation of slavery.[19] Thus, having provoked antislavery legislators in adopting retaliatory measures, proslavery statesmen provoked the very debate that they had wished to avoid.

Positions in the debate fell into three categories: (1) those

calling for the removal of free blacks from the state; (2) those wishing to amend the Federal Constitution giving Congress the power to purchase black slaves to transport from the United States; and (3) those urging the state to devise a plan for gradual emancipation, usually with some added scheme to speed blacks out of the state. Arguments developed along sectional lines. Eastern interests presented petitions opposing any form of emancipation, while westerners argued for exportation of slaves and gradual emancipation. Thus, east-west sectionalism, rooted in basic economic differences, prompted divergent views on slavery in the legislative debates of 1831-1832. As Representative James McDowell of Rockbridge remarked: "This is not a debate involving the first and leading principles of the Republic, nor a question relating to abstract principles of morality. It is a question of self-interest on the one hand and self-preservation on the other."[20]

Moral and Economic Argumentation

Torn by economic strains and irreconcilable attitudes, both eastern and western Virginians struggled for preservation of their respective social systems. The central issue promoting rampant sectionalism involved maintenance of an economic system based upon slavery. Opposing positions were delineated clearly as one section argued for the preservation of a life-support system and the other section agitated for removal of a nonessential institution. Moreover, under the basic conflict of competing economic systems, the highly emotional slavery issue further served to polarize eastern and western attitudes.

Hopes for cessation of sectionalism and preservation of a united

commonwealth forced Virginia's leaders to attempt compromise of the diverse economic elements within the state. Thus, the central issues of the legislative slave debates revolved around economic issues and these economic considerations formed the basis for competing arguments and rhetorical strategies.

Yet to urge sectional reconciliation on the basis of economics alone would not garner sufficient support from either east or west. Both sections held preexisting attitudes with regard to the economic feasibility of slavery that were not susceptible to persuasive efforts based upon economic premises. Because neither faction intended to suffer financial hardship for the benefit of the other, arguments based solely upon economic issues evolved into tactics of subversion. Reconciliation of eastern and western opinions thus required recourse to a broader base of debate than was encompassed by economic argument.

By removing the issues under discussion in the debate from the realm of competing economic arguments to the realm of higher values, Virginia's leaders focused their attention on basic moral considerations. Advocates of both eastern and western ideologies employed extensive moral arguments to soften their economic appeals, and clarified these economic appeals through the use of moral justifications. To this end, moral arguments, those based upon religious or ethical principles, and "designed to forward and establish the assertion that there is an acceptable code of behavior that should govern action, to clarify the code, and to apply it to specific cases," were joined with economic arguments, those designed to offer a rationale for material gain or maintenance of a standard of living.[21]

Typically, subversive rhetoric served to advance purely economic arguments through a strategy of attack in which economic appeals functioned as blatant denunciations of opposing positions on the slavery controversy.[22] With the introduction of morality issues into the debate, however, impotent economic argumentation gave way to a strategy of purification in which the economic benefits of slavery could be examined only in view of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the institution.[23] By elevating discussion of economic gains and losses resulting from slavery practices to questions involving moral judgments, the polarity created by sectional differences receded. Thus, the strategy of moral purification served as a central tactic in the debates, tempering regional divisions and providing the basis for justification of economic hardships.

Recurring Arguments in the Debates

Analysis of the debates yielded a list of eight recurring arguments in the discourse. Under these arguments, repetitive moral and economic themes clustered. Economic arguments supported four major themes treating an overriding concern for material output. Themes based on the increase or decrease of productivity under slavery, central to the focus of the legislature, involved arguments concerning the amount and type of employment necessary to harvest profitable cash crops. Additional arguments associated with this theme concerned the production of goods and services. A typical proslavery argument falling in this category discussed the introduction of improvements on plantations where ". . . slave labor most abounds," and concluded that ". . . the agricultural product of our State is greater now than it ever was at any previous period."[24]

By contrast, antislavery arguments falling under this theme maintained that improvements had slowed or that they had evolved in spite of the slavery system. Antislavery advocate Philip Bolling argued, for instance, that ". . . slave-labor [was] more expensive, and consequently less profitable than the labor of the white man."[25]

The economic theme of the comparative treatment of slaves in America and in Europe relied upon arguments contrasting the success of European economies that practiced slavery with those that did not. Proslavery arguments supporting this theme resembled the comments of Alexander G. Knox, who asserted that in Greece and Rome, ". . . sl[illegible]y w[illegible] tolerated in the severest form," and who concluded that the condition of slaves in America clearly surpassed that of England's ". . . miserable, wretched and degraded peasantry. . . . compared to whom, our slaves may be regarded as occupying a most enviable position."[26] Antislavery arguments dealing with comparative slave treatment assumed the opposite position and maintained that while slaves enjoyed mere animal comforts, they remained inferior to "free, intelligent populations."[27] As Representative George W. Summers argued, "Knowledge is incompatible with slavery, and without knowledge many of the occupations of life would cease. . . ."[28]

Themes concerning the status of slaves as property rested on arguments defending or negating the definition of slaves as legal possessions of their masters. Recurring proslavery arguments affirmed the legality of holding slaves as personal property. As William H. Roane stated, ". . . every slaveholder should feel and ever shall feel, as far as I am concerned, that his SLAVE IS HIS OWN PROPERTY."[29] Antislavery arguments opposed the concept of holding slaves as property and suggested

that laws permitting such action be repealed. Charles J. Faulkner maintained, for example, that "If the time has now arrived, when the public interests demand a different course of legislation, the same power which made them property, can divest them of that quality."[30]

Themes dealing with plans for returning slaves to Africa or retaining them in America involved arguments concerned with the economic advantages and disadvantages of employing "slave funds" for returning slaves to Africa or for purchasing their economic independence in America. Proslavery forces advocated removal of free blacks from the state and held that manumission could be allowed "upon the condition that the State has means ready for the immediate deportation of the manumitted."[31] While proslavery forces argued for manumission, they also urged that no plans for the project be discussed.[32] By contrast, antislavery advocates, such as William H. Brodnax, asserted that ". . . no emancipation of slaves should ever be tolerated unaccompanied by their immediate removal from among us," and urged formulation of a plan expediting slave deportation.[33] Whether they were approached from pro or antislavery positions, all four economic themes were based upon arguments with predominant focus on material prosperity and gain.

Analysis of the debates demonstrated that legislators paid little attention to statistical proof. Most assertions appeared without accompanying statements of support or justification that related to sectional economic differences. Speakers avoided employing concrete support by either ignoring the necessity for proof or by maintaining that the evidence for their assertions needed no articulation. When substantive supporting information accompanied assertions, this evidence assumed

extremely primitive forms of proof. Note, for example, the absurd use of statistical proof in the following statement. Reasoning that the cost of returning slaves to Africa amounted to a mere thirty cents tax on the white inhabitants of Virginia, Brodnax commented that this amount could be accommodated by "Abstinence from two or three glasses of toddy at the court house."[34] By avoiding the use of necessary proofs, the issue of economic hardship as it related to various sections of the state remained unarticulated in the debates. In this manner, legislators failed to present specific evidence demonstrating that a forced change in their respective economies would incur irreparable damage, and thus they circumvented explicit discussion of the abolition question as it pertained to eastern or western economic losses.

Division of recurring economic arguments into four primary themes permitted recognition of discernable strategic patterns in the rhetoric. Designed to undermine the opposition and implemented by varying appeals to threats of sectional economic losses, these arguments formed a rhetoric of subversion. The importance of sectionalism in shaping these economic arguments cannot be overstated. Antislavery advocates employed basic strategies designed to attack the very practice of slaveholding and to blame all economic ailments on the slavery system. The oppression of free labor, the destruction of the Virginia yeoman, and the subjugation of the laboring man resulted from the existence of the pernicious institution.[35] By contrast to antislavery speakers, those who favored slaveholding developed strategies designed to justify maintenance of the plantation system. Proslavery legislators maintained that the merits of the system, enjoyed by both slave and master, far outweighed its

deficiencies. Variations of such proslavery arguments held that slavery detracted from Virginia's economic prosperity less than plans designed to extricate her from the system. Thus, subversive rhetoric encompassing economic issues dealt with the preservation or destruction of two antithetical economic systems through an attack-justification strategic paradigm.

Moral arguments undergirded four themes dealing with religious or ethical principles and traded upon commonly accepted values and codes of behavior. Themes dealing with the defensibility or indefensibility of slavery rested upon biblical arguments justifying or condemning the institution. Proslavery spokesmen, such as John T. Brown, argued that Christ had not condemned slavery. "He appeared in a province of the Roman Empire," according to Brown, ". . . which was filled with slaves . . . Christ saw these slaves -- their numbers and their wretchedness. . . . Yet he rebuked not slavery."[36] Antislavery advocates countered with arguments maintaining that slavery and religious conviction remained incompatible. As Representative Bolling asserted, "They read in their Bibles, 'do unto all men as you would have them do unto you' -- and this golden rule and slavery were hard to reconcile. . . ."[37]

Moral themes dealing with the placement of blame for the existence and perpetuation of slavery rested upon arguments pointing toward the inheritance of a European value system that condoned holding slaves. Proslavery arguments held that blame should not be placed on slaveholders. "We are not responsible for the existence of slavery amongst us," James H. Gholson insisted. "It is here; and no reproaches on the one hand, or regrets on the other, can avoid it."[38] Brown forcefully

asserted that it was "cast upon us by the act of others. . . . It is our lot, our destiny -- and whether, in truth, it be right or wrong . . . the moment has never yet been, when it was possible for us to free ourselves from it."[39] Conversely, antislavery advocates blamed slaveholders for perpetuating the peculiar institution in America, despite loathesome inherited traditions. Slavery, Samuel Moore said, "was wholly at variance" with principles "which . . . teach the humblest individual to look upon all men as equal in the eye of his Creator."[40]

Themes treating the promotion or abridgement of liberty, justice and equality under the slavery system traded upon arguments dealing with the ultimate worth of freedom. Proslavery champions maintained that slaves did not deserve nor appreciate enjoyment of freedom. Proslavery speaker Roane, who did not "believe in that Fan-faronade about the natural equality of man," asserted inconsistently that "the torch of liberty has ever burnt brightest when surrounded by the dark and filthy, yet nutritious atmosphere of slavery."[41] Antislavery legislators, such as William B. Preston, took issue with this patent stupidity, insisting that all men should enjoy basic human freedoms: "The love of liberty is the ruling passion of man; it has been implanted in his bosom by the voice of God. . . ." The slave "cannot be happy if deprived of it."[42]

Finally, moral themes concerned with the positive or negative treatment of slaves relied upon biblical arguments dealing with respect for humanity and upon ethical arguments outlining the merits of benevolence toward lesser creatures. Proslavery forces argued that slaves received humane treatment and that they enjoyed "even some of the luxuries of life."[43] Presenting this positive assessment of slave

treatment, for example, William O. Goode enumerated many benefits conferred on the slave by his master. "He has an unrestrained abundance of . . . wholesome food. . . . an ample allowance of comfortable clothing. He is . . . well housed. He enjoys many reasonable indulgences."[44] Antislavery delegates responded by claiming the generosity to slaves failed to alleviate the oppression they endured. Their arguments focused not only on physical suffering, but on the denial of basic human rights. McDowell, for example, asserted that the slave was given "every privilege which the deprivation of his liberty" could allow, but counseled that there existed "a part of his nature which oppression cannot reach . . . a torch lit up in his soul by . . . the Deity and never meant to be extinguished by the hand of man."[45] All four moral themes, whether approached from pro or antislavery perspectives, relied on moral arguments based upon religious and ethical principles.

Although moral arguments generally reflected sectional loyalties, they crossed sectional lines and demonstrated similarities in one important aspect. All moral arguments rested on the assumption that the slave was an undesirable in Virginia society. No legislator, either pro or antislavery in orientation, ever advocated full emancipation. All regarded slaves an inherently inferior to whites. Proslavery advocate Roane stated flatly that he did "not believe that all men are by nature equal . . .," and continued, saying, "I no more believe that the flat-nosed, woolly-headed black native of the deserts of Africa, is equal to the straight-haired white man of Europe, than I believe the stupid, scentless greyhound is equal to the noble, generous dog of Newfoundland."[46] Antislavery spokesmen also regarded blacks as

inferiors. Summers, for example, quickly tempered his arguments against the continuance of slavery by remarking that he was "no fanatic or philanthropic enthusiast, anxious only to better the condition of the blacks," whom, he said, "exercis[ed] the most pernicious influence upon the manners, habits and character, of those among whom [they] exist."[47]

Despite concensus that blacks were inferior elements of Virginia society, legislators recognized the need to deal with their undeniable presence in an humane fashion. Moral arguments reflected speakers' attempts to cope with the presence of the black population through the advocacy of their respective economic systems. These moral arguments, asserting that either removal or retention of slaves resolved the problem of their presence in Virginia, reflected a rhetoric of purification. This rhetoric of purification functioned to temper any tarnishing effect of opposing economic arguments and to defend against attacks of the opposition. As with economic arguments, moral arguments formed strategies of attack and justification. Such strategies permitted both pro and antislavery forces simultaneously to undermine opposing value systems and defend their respective ethical perspectives with regard to the slavery issue.

In addition to strategies of attack and justification, a strategy of unification emerged that encouraged coalition of interests under one economic system for the preservation of a united state. In the name of "Virginia one and indivisible,"[48] proponents of both slavery and antislavery positions argued that the opposing side concede and adopt the alternate economic system. Thus, in both pro and antislavery rhetoric,

appeals to mutual religious and ethical values, common patriotic attitudes, and shared origins functioned to promote abandonment of sectional economic interests under threat of dissolution.

Both sides blended moral and economic arguments to promote acceptance of their respective positions. Economic argumentation subordinated moral argumentation as sectional financial interests remained of primary concern to the legislators. Moral arguments provided additional persuasive power for economic attacks or justifications, and thus functioned as inducements to belief that transcended sectional lines. Note, for example, the blending of moral and economic arguments in the remarks of proslavery advocate Brown. Explaining that "The people of the east are planters. Slaves are the most suitable labourers for them," he continued that "The people of the west . . . are farmers and graziers. They need comparatively, but few labourers. . . ."[49] Yet, in concluding his remarks, Brown asserted that he remained "Yet to be convinced, that slavery as it exists in Virginia, is either criminal or immoral. . . ."[50] Antislavery forces blended economic and moral arguments in the same manner. Bolling maintained, for example, that it seemed "a needless waste of time for him to point out . . . the causes which rendered slave-labor dearer than the labor of a free white man," and concluded that "the answer is to be found in the operation of moral causes," which he then enumerated.[51] Thus, regardless of sectional stance, moral arguments supplemented economic arguments in the debates, providing emotional impact in lieu of substantive economic proof. No specific moral arguments were teamed with particular economic arguments in any discernable pattern. Because no recurring combination of moral and

economic arguments appeared in the discourse, it may be concluded that the substance of the arguments remained of secondary concern, and that the rhetorical form of the arguments assumed paramount importance.

In sum, analysis of the slave debates revealed strategies of attack-justification, and unification. Proslavery forces urged maintenance of the existing slavery system by demonstrating its economic superiority and disclaiming its moral inferiority. Conversely, antislavery advocates argued for removal of the system by illustrating its economic indefensibility and describing the moral decay it perpetuated. Under the threat of division within the state, both sides argued for unification of diverse economic interests on the basis of shared values.

Neither pro nor antislavery advocates attended to matters of conscience as primary considerations in the debates. Economic arguments remained of paramount importance throughout the rhetorical struggle, while moral arguments failed to possess sufficient strength to stand alone. From their positions of secondary importance, moral arguments, reflecting transcending ideologies, failed to promote compromise of sectional economic interests. Proslavery forces won the debates, maintaining the slavery system and the economy it supported.[52] The Virginia slave debates functioned as a beginning and not an end to the slavery controversy that raged within the Old Dominion and throughout the country. Arguments developed in the Virginia clash reappeared throughout the years preceding the Civil War, as statewide sectional differences enlarged to become major north-south conflicts. Surely, Virginians recalled the 1832 triumph of mammon over morality.

Notes

[1] James C. Ballagh, A History of Slavery in Virginia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1902), pp. 7-10; Joseph Clarke Robert, The Road From Monticello: A Study of the Virginia Slavery Debate of 1832 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1941), p. 11.

[2] "The Diary of John Floyd" in Charles H. Ambler, ed., John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College (n.p.: n.p., 1918), V. I & II, p. 151.

[3] Citizens presented petitions for arms and banded together against future slave revolts. To their slaves, masters camouflaged their terror lest demonstrations of fearfulness awaken further ideas of revolt. As a correspondent for the Portland Advertiser observed, "the horrors of Southampton have aroused them. They lie down to sleep with fear. They hardly venture out on nights." The Washington correspondent of the Portland Advertiser, quoted in the Massachusetts Spy, Worcester, 29 Feb. 1832.

[4] "Mohun" in Petersburg Times, quoted in the Southern Religious Telegraph, 2 Dec. 1831, quoted in Robert, p. 14.

[5] Charles H. Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1910), pp. 1-23.

[6] Theodore M. Whitfield, Slavery Agitation in Virginia, 1839-1842 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1930), p. 13.

[7] Whitfield, p. 13.

[8] Ambler, Sectionalism, pp. 1-23.

[9] Robert, p. 11.

[10] Ambler, Sectionalism, p. 186.

[11] Ambler, Sectionalism, p. 190.

[12] Ambler, Sectionalism, p. 190.

[13] Goode's petition read as follows: "That the select committee raised on the subject of slaves, free negroes, and the melancholy occurrences growing out of the tragical massacre in Southampton, be discharged from the consideration of all petitions, memorials and reolutions, which have for their object, the manumission of persons held in servitude under the existing laws of this commonwealth, and that it is not expedient to legislate on the subject." See the Richmond Enquirer, 12 Jan. 1832, and the Richmond Constitutional Whig, 13 Jan. 1832.

[14] Ambler, Sectionalism, pp. 190-191.

[15] Robert, p. 17.

[16] The Richmond Enquirer, 7 Jan. 1832, in Robert, pp. 17-18. This editorial was reprinted in mary regional newspapers.

[17] Goode, for example, remarked on 11 Jan. 1832 about the power of the press on public opinion: "The consideration of this subject had given rise to the diffusion of opinion highly injurious. It was well

known that the public press had embarked in the discussion of the subject, and in favor of abolition: and he need not speak of the power of the press. . . . These expressions of opinion had produced, and were producing, the most disastrous effects. . . ." See the Richmond Enquirer, 19 Jan. 1832.

[18] Ambler, Sectionalism, pp. 192-196.

[19] Whitfield, pp. 75-79.

[20] McDowell quoted in Ambler, Sectionalism, p. 186.

[21] James R. Andrews, "'Charting Cultural Paths': Toward a Method for Investigating Rhetorical-Cultural Interaction," in Rhetoric in Transition: Studies in the Nature and Uses of Rhetoric, ed. Eugene White (University Park, P.A.: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1980), p. 103.

[22] Walter R. Fisher, "A Motive View of Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (1970), 131-132.

Fisher theorized that the need to alter or reinforce an image commonly held by a group of people may result in a number of motives derived from the rhetorical situation. A subversive rhetoric is concerned principally with the process of undermining an image found in that situation.

[23] Fisher, p. 132. Purification rhetoric is primarily concerned with correcting or cleansing an image within the rhetorical situation.

[24] William O. Goode, quoted in the Richmond Constitutional Whig, 28 March 1832.

[25] Philip A. Bolling, The Speeches of Philip A. Bolling in The House of Delegates of Virginia, On the Policy of the State in Relation to Her Colored Population: Delivered on the 11th and 25th of January, 1832 (Richmond, V.A.: n.p., 1832), p. 6.

[26] Alexander G. Knox, quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, 11 Feb. 1832.

[27] George W. Summers, quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, 14 Feb. 1832.

[28] Summers, 14 Feb. 1832.

[29] William H. Roane, quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, 4 Feb. 1832.

[30] Charles John Faulkner, in the House of Del. of Virginia, on The Policy of the State with Respect to Her Slave Population, Richmond, 20 Jan. 1832, pp. 14-15.

[31] Rice W. Wood, quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, 7 Feb. 1832.

[32] See, for example, Wood, 7 Feb. 1832.

[33] William H. Brodnax, in the House of Del. of Virginia, on The Policy of the State with Respect to its Colored Population, Richmond, 19 Jan. 1832, pp. 12-18.

[34] Brodnax, p. 32.

[35] Robert, p. 22.

[36] John Thompson Brown, in the House of Del. of Virginia, on The Abolition of Slavery, Richmond, 18 Jan. 1832, p. 22.

[37] Bolling, p. 14.

[38] James H. Gholson, quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, 21 Jan. 1832.

[39] Brown, p. 21.

[40] Samuel Moore, quoted in the Richmond Constitutional Whig, 28 March 1832.

[41] Roane, 4 Feb. 1832.

[42] William B. Preston, quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, 9 Feb. 1832.

[43] Goode, 28 March 1832.

[44] Goode, 28 March 1832.

[45] James McDowell, Jr., in the House of Del. of Virginia, on The Slave Question, 2 ed., Richmond, 21 Jan. 1832, pp. 19-20.

[46] Roane, 4 Feb. 1832.

[47] Summers, 14 Feb. 1832.

[48] Faulkner, 20 Jan. 1832.

[49] Brown, 18 Jan. 1832, p. 13.

[50] Brown, 18 Jan. 1832, pp. 20-21.

[51] Bolling, p. 11.

[52] Robert, pp. 34-35, and notes 13-14.